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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH  
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## NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Vol. IV No. 10

For Week Ending  
15 March 1949

## GREECE

Macedonian complications: Despite the prominence suddenly given the age-old Macedonian question, it is probably not the first item on the agenda of the Slavo-Macedonian "National Liberation Front" (NOF) conference which was scheduled to begin this week, and rapid development of the Macedonian situation is not in prospect. Although the conference may be expected to make some sort of pronouncement regarding Slavo-Macedonian aspirations, the delegates will probably do a good deal of preliminary hedging and soul-searching in an attempt to determine who is really calling the tune in the present Macedonian dance.

The problems confronting the Slavo-Macedonians are symptomatic of the unsettled state of intra-Communist relationships in the area. The very raising of the Macedonian issue has already discommoded the Greek Communist leaders, who, in considering their rank and file, are understandably reluctant to express a definite choice between Kremlinism, Titoism, and the nationalistic variety of Greek Communism so long as no one line offers clear and easy benefits without strong attendant disadvantages. Indeed, the difficulty which the opening of the Macedonian question is presenting to the guerrillas suggest the possibility that their priority in Communist schemes for the Balkans may actually have slipped down a notch, pending the settlement of conflicting Communist desires in the area. Even the reports--through Greek Government sources--of military movements and of guerrilla concentrations in southwestern Bulgaria appear to represent perhaps more a form of pressure on the part of one set of Communists upon another than an immediate guerrilla intention to provide territory for a Slavo-Macedonian state at the expense of Greece.

## TURKEY

HCL in Turkey: There will probably be no important amelioration of what is possibly Turkey's most severe economic headache, the

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high cost of living, until current plans for improving the transportation and storage system have been carried out. The largest single item in the cost of agricultural products in Turkey is only too often the cost of transporting them, and prices are often further boosted because of spoilage resulting from poor means of storage. Current programs contemplate extensive improvement of Turkey's highway system, the provision of more rolling stock and generally improved railroad services, modernized port facilities, and an improved coastwise merchant marine. Additional improvements will be undertaken as time and financial resources permit. All this, of course, will make possible not only a lowered cost of living, but increased export trade.

### PALESTINE

Military situation: During the past week Israeli forces abruptly ended the recent Arab-Jewish military status quo in one sector of Palestine--the southern Negeb--and set the stage for a possible assault in another sector--the central, Iraqi-controlled region.

The rapid Israeli advance through the southern Negeb to the Gulf of Aqaba was a tactical move to occupy the last remaining portion of Palestine granted to the Jews by the UN partition plan of November 1947, thus presenting a fait accompli to the armistice conference with Transjordan at Rhodes. In the first part of the week one Jewish column thrust southward close to the Transjordan frontier, coming into contact with Arab Legion units at several points. Meanwhile, farther west, another large column of Jewish troops advanced southward through the central Negeb, closely following the Egyptian frontier. By 9 March Israeli troops entered Umm Reshresh on the Gulf of Aqaba and thus completed the consolidation of the southern Negeb region.

Israeli military activities along the Iraqi-controlled central sector have not as yet developed into an open attack, but the reported assembling of Jewish troops at various coastal towns just south of Haifa suggests that another Israeli drive may come in this area, with the concentration of troops just west of Tulkarm possibly indicating that the initial Israeli goal is the Tulkarm-Jenin-Nablus triangle. Other Arab Legion reports suggest that the Israelis may also attempt to advance south along the Jordan river from Beisan. Other reasons for suspecting a possible central Palestine offensive are the prospective relief of the

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Iraqi forces in the area by smaller Arab Legion garrisons, which would provide the Israelis with an opportunity for taking over the last big area of Palestine still under Arab control, and the complaints registered by the Israeli press and radio, as well as by government officials, against Arab attacks on Jews in the coastal plain. In addition, the Israelis have been unwilling to be pinned down in armistice negotiations concerning the north-central sector.

### ITALIAN COLONIES

Tripolitanian trusteeship: The proposal of a US trusteeship for Tripolitania has been revived in recent statements of Arab leaders and in the recent efforts of British Foreign Secretary Bevin to ascertain whether the US would be willing to reconsider its position and accept a trusteeship. Such a solution, which would probably be acceptable to France and would probably be acquiesced in by Italy, would be the most pleasing one for the bulk of the Tripolitanian population, on the ground that US trusteeship would provide economic assistance without jeopardizing eventual Tripolitanian independence. The British Military Administration is disliked for its passive "care and maintenance" policy, and Italian rule would be unacceptable, not only to the Arab majority but also to the many Italians in Tripolitania who fear that the basic resentment against Italy is so strong that their position would be imperiled by an Italian trusteeship.

Should Italy be named as trustee, widespread disorders are likely, and there is a possibility that the Tripolitanians would attempt to declare independence either for Tripolitania or for a united Libya. To keep order, Italy would thus have to maintain a force several times the size of the present British Military Administration, and guerrilla warfare would make any economic assistance, which the country so vitally needs for its recovery, almost impossible. Arab leaders have raised the additional point that, since the US would eventually have to "foot the bills, anyway," it would be better for the US to administer the country directly.

### IRAN

Relations with the USSR: A serious deterioration of Soviet-Iranian relations now appears to be taking place, mainly as a result of the stiffening attitude Iran has been taking toward the Soviets, apparently

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in the belief that US support was assured and that the USSR would not use force against Iran short of a general war. Since the recent attempt to assassinate the Shah, Iran has not only moved against pro-Soviet elements in the population but has also, in the intensified propaganda war which has arisen, attacked the USSR directly for the first time, particularly through scathing radio broadcast references to slave labor practices, poverty, and misrule within the Soviet boundaries. At the same time the USSR is being confronted with rumors of Iran's possible inclusion in an anti-Soviet regional defense pact and with the irritating spectacle of US military aid arriving in Iran and of a vast economic development program being initiated with US technical assistance. Whether the USSR will consider the time appropriate for direct action against Iran is problematical. The Soviet may well feel, however, the Iran's insolence at least calls for an intensification of the war of nerves and a new round of threatening diplomatic notes. The possibility that such measures will be adopted by the USSR will probably induce Iran to: (1) act on long-standing US advice that it inform the Security Council regarding Irano-Soviet relations; and (2) urgently renew its repeated request that the US officially refute Soviet charges that Iran is being turned into an offensive base against the USSR.

#### INDIA-PAKISTAN

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations: A recent incident in the Waziristan district of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province has increased the tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the tribal issue. When 600 followers of the Faqir of Ipi--a chronic trouble maker alleged by the Pakistanis to be in the pay of the Indians--reportedly attacked a fort at the town of Thal garrisoned by a small contingent of Waziristan Scouts, Pakistan sent out two RPAF planes, which opened fire on the attackers and dispelled them with nine dead and a score wounded. This action has evoked violent protests from the Afghan Foreign Minister, the Afghan Charge at Karachi and the Kabul press. The Foreign Minister, expressing fear that the incident may have serious repercussions among the Waziri tribesmen, has asserted that his government has documentary evidence that many tribal groups on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line desire Afghan assistance and protection against integration into Pakistan; he added that if Pakistan persisted in considering the

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tribal areas an integral part of Pakistan, tribal pressure might compel the Afghan Government to call a Loe Jirga (intertribal conference) on the subject and in turn make an appeal to the UN Security Council. Meanwhile the Government of Pakistan, although it appears to be following a cautious policy regarding the tribal areas, is unlikely to change its policy, regardless of Afghanistan's reaction. The US Embassy in Karachi feels that the return of the Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan may ease the situation.

## NOTED IN BRIEF

The Communist Party of Cyprus (AKEL) has announced the resignation of its entire central committee after a period of self-criticism for "bourgeois influences and serious faults," and Communist trade union leaders have assumed interim leadership until the July Party Congress. This development is linked with the January switch in the party line from demands for Cyprus self-government to the more popular demands for enosis (union with Greece), and represents an attempt to secure maximum popular support in the May municipal elections. If the Communists lose ground in these elections, as seems not unlikely, the original, more militant Communist leadership may well resume power in July, thereupon switching back to a vigorous program of subversion and strikes.

\* \* \*

The Greek military outlook continues to show slow, steady improvement. A new indication of a more effective army command policy is the fact that a Greek general and six other senior officers are to be courtmartialled for inefficiency in the recent Karpenision battle, in which the garrison was lost and some 3,500 guerrillas were allowed to escape without close pursuit.

\* \* \*

The Turkish armed forces, which have usually been given a few perfunctory words of praise on the presentation of the National Defense budget have now for the first time been severely criticized in the Assembly. In this year's budget debate, Deputy Zeytinoglu of the opposition Democratic Party bluntly charged that the armed

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forces, particularly the services of supply, were behind the times, adding that the services were poorly organized and had not made satisfactory progress in mechanization. Zeytinoglu, who seemed to voice his party's views, concluded with the observation that the nation would accept an even larger defense budget if necessary for the creation of an adequate, modern military establishment.

\* \* \*

Although the Soviet Ambassador has reportedly asked about Turkey's attitude toward a "Mediterranean" pact, no formal Soviet query appears to have been made. The Turkish viewpoint on this issue has been repeatedly aired: the Turks are definitely interested in a strong regional defensive alliance. At present, the realistic Turks are awaiting announcement of the precise terms of the Atlantic Pact, along with whatever reassurances to Turkey that may coincidentally be forthcoming, before deciding on what further steps should be taken.

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In obtaining a 73-45 vote of confidence for the new Israeli Cabinet on 10 March, Premier Ben-Gurion asserted that Jerusalem was "as much a part of Israel as any other part;" declared that although the coalition would have liked to have MAPAM support, it would do well without it; and told Herut and the Stern Gang that they were not wanted in the government.

\* \* \*

The meeting which the Arab League Council is scheduled to hold in Cairo on 17 March will be a critical one for Secretary General Azzam Pasha and for the League itself. Azzam hopes to avoid controversial subjects, and instead work for a concerted Arab approach regarding the Palestine Conciliation Commission's 21 March meeting and regarding other points on which the member states could be expected to agree.

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Although the Egyptian security situation seems better, the government has not relaxed its elaborate security precautions. More Ikhwan members were arrested this week, more tons of explosives found,

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and 6 more Communist cells (complete with 3 printing presses) captured. The Cairo parade of the released Faluja garrison was carried off without incident, and although the Rhodes armistice text has finally been submitted to the Egyptian Parliament, no serious repercussions therefrom are expected.

\* \* \*

Preliminary to negotiations with the Sheikh of Kuwait for a concession over the islands of Kubr, Qaru, and Umm el Maradim, the American Independent Oil Company (AMINCO) has obtained assurance from the British Foreign Office that the UK will not attempt to influence the Sheikh in the negotiations. However, the validity of the concession (if granted) will be dependent on a decision regarding ownership of the islands. If they are ruled part of Kuwaiti territory, rather than part of the Neutral Zone, they fall within the sphere of operations of the Kuwait Oil Company, and any new concession obtained by AMINCO will accordingly lapse.

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The Syrian Minister of Economy has confirmed the report that the Iraq Petroleum Company has surrendered a third of its concession, largely in the Latakia region. He further stated that serious consideration was being given to proposals by J. W. Menhall, an independent oil operator, regarding the granting of a new concession for the released areas.

\* \* \*

Prime Minister Nehru's strong foreign policy speech before the Constituent Assembly on 8 March indicated, in general, no change in India's policy of aloofness from foreign blocs. Although Nehru asserted that India has a major stake in maintenance of peace, abolition of racial inequality, and freedom of subjugated peoples throughout the world, he stated that otherwise India does not seek to interfere in the affairs of other nations and does not wish others to interfere in Indian affairs. Regarding relations with the Commonwealth, he hinted that India might drop its allegiance to the Crown this year by stating that within a few months India will become an independent republic which would "not accept anything that involves the slightest degree of dependence on any other authority," and would retain membership in the Commonwealth only as a free nation.

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The Azad Kashmir Government has resigned in order to reconstitute the cabinet on a wider basis. Details regarding the composition of the new government are lacking.

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The scheduled 9 March strike of Communist-dominated railway unions did not materialize. Minor incidents were reported but railway and local communications were uninterrupted. Indian railway officials have termed the strike a "total failure."

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